The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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AGITATE! EDUCATE! ORGANIZE!

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PRIVILEGE RESISTS EVERY SOCIAL ADVANCE

Whenever the workers challenge wrong, they must expect opposition by every power at the command of wrong.

Privilege never surrenders voluntarily. It is now running true to form in its opposition to the federal child labor amendment.

In its frenzy at labor's political activity it exhibits the same fear of losing favors that have no place in a government based on popular rule.

The history of privilege is a record of opposition to social advance.

It has contested every inch in the people's upward march. It has been silent before corruption in high places and in the exploitation and ruin of our natural resources.

It has resisted compensation laws, child labor laws, educational proposals and acts to protect life and limb. It strives to shackle workers to their employment and to fasten compulsory arbitration on those who toil.

It has denounced the initiative, referendum and recall as a violation of the spirit of our institutions. It took the same position toward the proposal that United States senators be elected by popular vote.

In not a single instance has it aided the passage of social legislation or advanced the cause of political democracy.

No one need be alarmed at the frenzy and the shouts of this element. Instead, these alarms should be considered encouraging signs. They indicate that the people are uniting their forces for another advance, which privilege would again check.

Let the workers keep in mind that every industrial and political gain has been made despite protests they again hear.

There is nothing sacred in man-made institutions. The people made the constitution, and who has the right to say they may not amend it?

And neither are the courts immune from intelligent, constructive criticism. They, too, were created by the people. They are composed of human beings—too often, very ordinary human beings.

Many learned members of the judiciary join with criticism of the courts.

Opposition to the federal child labor amendment is partly a fear of loss of profits, but also because privilege opposes any change that is not beneficial to it.

Privilege can not twist and warp that amendment to its advantage, as is the case with other amendments.

It opposes this amendment for the further reason that adoption would encourage the people to adjust their organic law to the industrial and political age.

Privilege is satisfied. It stands pat, as it always has.

VETO POWER BY COURTS NOT UPHELD BY HISTORY

SENATOR LA FOLLETTE

Before A. F. of L. Convention, Cincinnati, 1922

From what source, it may be asked, have the federal judges derived the supreme power which they now so boldly assert?

Not only was such power not given to the judiciary, state or federal, but the records of the constitutional convention show that when it was proposed in the constitutional convention that judges should have a veto upon acts of congress, it was decisively defeated on four separate occasions, and at no time received the support of more than three states.

As a matter of fact, no member of the constitutional convention was bold enough to bring forward a proposition that federal judges should have the power of nullifying a law after it had been enacted by congress and approved by the president.

The most extreme measure offered exalting the power of the judiciary was merely the proposal offered by Madison and James Wilson, that the supreme court have the same power as the president has upon legislation before its final adoption, and if the supreme court should hold it unconstitutional, that the measure in question should be passed by a two-third vote of each house before it should become effective as law.

It was in this restricted form that the members of the constitutional convention overwhelmingly rejected the theory of "a paramount judiciary."

There is, therefore, no sanction in the written constitution of the United States for the power which the courts now assert. They have secured this power only by usurpation.

Thomas Jefferson foresaw this inevitable encroachment of the judiciary upon the sovereignty of the people and used his mighty powers to resist it. He said:

"It has long been my opinion, and I have never shrunk from its expression, that the germ of dissolution of our federal government is in the judiciary—the irresponsible body working like gravity, by day and by night, gaining a little today and a little tomorrow and advancing its noiseless step like a thief over the field of jurisdiction until all shall be usurped."

In extending their jurisdiction in other directions the federal courts have often gone to the judiciary of England for precedents, but in asserting their right to set aside the laws of congress they have never looked in that direction and for a very good reason. As Chief Justice Clark of the supreme court of North Carolina has aptly said:

"The courts have attempted only once to assert a right to set aside an act of parliament, and then Chief Justice Tresillian was hanged and his associates exiled to France, and hence subsequent courts have not relied upon it as a precedent. * * * No court in England since Tresillian's day has refused to obey an act of parliament."

Several years ago Justice Harlan, one of the wisest and most far-sighted men who ever sat on the supreme court, said:

"When the American people come to the conclusion that the judiciary of this land is usurping to itself the functions of the legislative department of the government, and that the construction only is declaring what should be the public policy of the United States, we will have trouble. Ninety millions of people—all sorts of people with all sorts of opinions—will not patiently submit to the usurpation by the judiciary of the functions of other departments of the government and the power on its part to declare what is the public policy of the United States."

Woolen Trust Fails To Pay Dividend Labor Holds Stock; Faces Wage Cut

New York, Sept. 13.—Directors of the American woolen company (the trust) have voted to pass their common stock quarterly dividend. This means that $700,000 will not be distributed to stockholders.

The political agents of privilege are panicky, for in addition to the passing of dividends, wage reductions are discussed.

In previous years monopoly did not pass dividends or discuss wage reductions during a presidential campaign. The woolen trust's unexpected move would indicate that the industrial captains are satisfied with the nominees of both old parties.

The public was unprepared for the trust's action. William Wood, president of the trust, declared against wage reductions three months ago and let it be understood that the corporation's surplus of $33,000,000 is sufficient to meet dividend requirements.

It was this declaration by one of the shrewdest stock manipulators in the country that offset rumors that the dividend would be passed, and permitted "insiders" to load up heavily.

The passing of the dividend will be a hardship to the trust's thousands of unorganized workers who were induced to invest in this stock. They were told that the income would protect them during unemployment. Many of them are now unemployed, and those who are working face wage reductions. All of these have failed to collect their dividends, while the "insiders," who knew the blow was coming, have won more than their dividends by playing the market without a chance to lose.

The grim humor of the situation is the warning to labor by these "insiders" and their political agents that "the election of La Follette will cause hard times."

The woolen trust owns and operates 55 mills in New York, Massachusetts, Kentucky, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut and Maine. In the past 10 years earnings have been stupendous, with stock dividend issues to "spread out" the profits. Four years ago the trust increased its preferred stock from $40,000,000 to $60,000,000 and its common stock from $20,000,000 to $40,000,000. Last year its net income was $6,660,213, and it reported a surplus of $33,596,825.

HEAVENS WON'T FALL BY COURT CRITICISM

New York, Sept. 13.—"The president is easily disturbed by any word of criticism of the courts," says the New York World, which declares that the president "in his agitation seems to imagine that only the supreme court stands between the American people and ruin."

"When a group of persons ventures to question its infallibility he can feel the earth pack on the foundations and hear the Heavens crumbling. An unfriendly remark reaches his ear, and all property is to be wiped out, all liberty destroyed.

"For in Wisconsin a new Attila has arisen who, at the head of his socialist hordes, is preparing to sack great cities, lay waste rich provinces and make a barren wilderness of the United States."

In this chafing spirit the World discusses the Coal Baltimore speech, which included dire prophecies if the supreme court is criticised.

"The World advises Mr. Coolidge to compose himself," and the chief executive is reminded that the nine members of the court, though learned in the law, "infrequently differ among themselves, sometimes by as close a margin as five to four.

"At critical moments the court has even reversed itself, as in the income tax case. In a Civil war the Constitution has frequently been broken and has happened more than once that congress has passed new legislation to get around court decisions and has submitted amendments to the constitution which state legislatures have ratified. After the court had unanimously banned by the supreme court shall be made possible. What has happened before can happen many times again.

"The constitution is not unchangeable and the supreme court is not an immovable bar to progress under the constitution," says the World. "But what seems so terribly to alarm Mr. Coolidge is the suggestion that one justice, or possibly two, serving to make up a narrow majority of the supreme court, shall not necessarily be always an obstacle that congress can not surmount. It may some day come to that, if the opinion in the United States is ripe for such an innovation.

"As to any rate, the limitation of the powers of the court is a proposal that may be reasonably discussed. No patriotic man is compelled to either accept the idea or reject it, it is not inciting a riot or promoting a revolution to discuss it, any more than discuss Fall, Daugherty and Forbes is to menace the basic principles of self government."

"EVEN CHANCE TO WIN," IS PROGRESSIVES' BELIEF

Washington, Sept. 13.—"Progressive sentiment is sweeping the country to such an extent that conservative political observers now grant the independent progressive ticket an even break with President Coolidge for the election," declared Senator La Follette in speaking to a meeting of A. F. of L. representatives and a score of executives of international unions and railroad brotherhoods. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss details of the campaign, which will be vigorously pressed in every section of the country.

"To sustain his estimate of present conditions, Senator La Follette cited a variety of reports from workers, from business men, farmers, and persons in every walk of life in different sections of the country.

"There is a ground swell in this country—the tide of progressive sentiment is amazing," Senator La Follette said.

"I have worked with many of you for years and I hope to keep on working with you for 10 or 20 years to come. I do not want to jeopardize my reputation as a seasoned political observer. I don't want you to feel that I am exaggerating. But today our movement is even with the candidacy of Coolidge and our movement is steadily growing. As things stand today, we have an absolutely even break to win.

"People are realizing that in another 25 years, if they are not checked, the small group which is trying to gain control of the markets of America and of her natural resources will have reduced the farmers to the level of the peasantry of Europe and the working men will have become merely a privileged slave," Mr. La Follette said.

"The great question is, can we bring the government back to what it was destined to be? Are the American people strong enough to possess themselves of their government? Can they defeat those special interests, or whatever you may be pleased to call those influences which crack the whip in the corridors of the capitol, operate in the White House and control appointments to the cabinet?"

Judging from letters approving his Labor Day address, Senator La Follette will draw equally from both old parties. Of those who declared they had been affiliated with either of the major parties, 51.85 per cent were deserting the Republican party for the La Follette-Wheeler ticket, while 48.15 per cent said they formerly supported the Democratic ticket.

MINERS NOT ALARMED AT "HIGH WAGE" CRY

Indianapolis, Sept. 13.—"No one is fooling the miner by telling him that the reason for the present depression in the coal industry is because of the high wages he is supposedly making," says Ellis Searles, editor of the United Mine Workers' Journal.

"The miner has been too long in the game and knows that such arguments are made for no other purpose than to break down the public support the union miner has been receiving.

"The efforts being made in several of the bituminous producing states to pull the public into believing that the ailment in the coal industry is due to 'high wages' is the veriest poppycock. It is merely one of this. He knows that it is a scheme to break his morale and to reduce his wages to somewhere in the vicinity of the wages paid in the non-union fields. It is merely a case of increased profits for the operator who starts buying cheap coal—and that time, by the way, is now here.

"Coal reserves are at new low levels because the coal-consuming public has been calling on these reserves supply rather than buying fresh coal. The end of such a policy is in sight and the mines are beginning to open and buying and shipping have been issued by railroads that a car shortage is imminent for next winter unless coal begin moving now. Operators have foreseen these circumstances and, of course, would like to increase their profits by hammering wages down.

"But union wages will not be hammered down and coal will be produced under the terms of the Jacksonville agreement, which was amicably set up in a conference between operators and miners last spring."

BUSINESS-MEN URGED TO USE U.S. VESSELS

Washington, Sept. 13.—The United States shipping board's appeal to business men to cease using foreign ships and patronize American vessels reveals the insincerity of these alleged friends of an American merchant marine.

It is stated that in the last 10 years the seagoing trade of the United States amounted to $70,000,000, most of which has been carried by foreigners ewhile American ships are rotting at their anchorage.

While alarming the decline of America's merchant marine, these business men patronize foreign companies in which they are often interested. To cloak their unpatriotic acts they denounce the La Follette seamen's act and mourn for a return of the days when the American boy will return to the sea.

These interests do not want the American boy. This is proven by conditions in the coastwise trade where American ships have a monopoly. This trade is protected for American business men, but not for American seamen. In many instances the latter have been driven out of the coastwise trade by the cheapest labor in the world. Here the American business man does not face competition. He has a clear field to exploit the American boy, but this he does not do.

During the late war, when considerations other than cheapness determined the manning of America's merchant fleet on the seven seas, there was no difficulty in finding American boys. When the war ended the native drifted back to the farm. The ship owners' tactics are responsible for this change. With them, nativity and nationality in the crew was not considered. They wanted cheap crews and it made no difference whether the color was yellow, black or white.

WOMEN WAGE EARNERS ARE PAID LOW RATES

Washington, Sept. 13.—In a survey of women in Missouri industries, the United States women's bureau reports that in May and June, 1923, "one-half of the 15,364 white women in the state for whom information was reported earned less than $12.65 a week. Even when consideration is limited to those who had worked a full week, one-half of these women earned less than $13.70."

The report classes Missouri as "among the moderately progressive states" because it has a nine-hour daily standard and a 54-hour week. Earnings are considered relatively low one-half of these workers earning under $6 a week.

The largest number of women were employed in the manufacture of shirts and overalls, in shoe factories and in general mercantile establishments. The median wage for the 2,486 shirt and overall workers was $10.90, for the 1,000 workers $12.80, and for the 2,717 women employed in general stores $14.45. One-half of the 4,404 women in the state working outside St. Louis and Kansas City earned less than $10.40 a week. These women are practically all native born, as Missouri has no immigrant problem.

BUILDING WAGES UP

Davenport, Iowa, Sept. 13.—A joint wage movement of 2,000 craftsmen in this city, Rock Island and Moline has proven successful. Rates are advanced $1 a day.

INDIANA IN LINE FOR "FIGHTING BOB"

Indianapolis, Sept. 13.—The Indiana state federation of labor has joined the other A. F. of L. state affiliates that have wheeled into the La Follette column.

The resolution approved the A. F. of L. executive council in supporting La Follette and Wheeler.

The convention pledged its "untiring support" to the election of the independent candidates "for the purpose of bringing about cooperation of all forward-looking units of the people who resent the selection of two Wall street pawns to represent the people."

New Haven, Sept. 13.—At its annual convention the Connecticut state federation of labor voted to support La Follette and Wheeler.

DON'T KNOW LABOR LAW

Harrisburg, Pa., Sept 13.—The department of labor and industry reports that there "seems to be a great deal of ignorance" among employers with reference to the age certificate section of the child labor law. The certificate is asked in few mills, factories and mercantile establishments, it is said.

$2,163,629 PROFIT

New York, Sept. 13.—The Kansas City power and light company reports a net profit last year of $2,163,629 after interest, taxes, amortization and depreciation have been met. With dividends paid the surplus amounts to nearly half a million dollars.

CLOAK MAKERS' STRIKE FORCES NEW STANDARDS

Boston, Sept. 13.—After an eight-days' strike organized cloak makers won a complete victory over small anti-union shops and jobbers in this city. The recognized cloak manufacturers accepted the agreement which places this industry on a new basis.

The principle clauses of the new agreement call for the registration of contractors by the jobbers; a minimum of six machines manned by six operators in a shop; the unemployment insurance fund, conducted by both employers and employed; a sanitary union label; an impartial chairman for the local trade; equal distribution of work among all contractors; no discharge of employees during the season without just cause, and an obligation placed upon the contractors not to purchase non-union made garments within this state. In case of a strike, notification to the jobber by the union will be considered sufficient for the jobber to cease dealing with the struck concern.

MINERS REBUILD HOME WRECKED BY GUN MEN

Brady, W. Va., Sept. 13.—Fifteen thousand miners, their wives and children assembled at this place to dedicate their new building which will replace the one wrecked last June by gun men of the Brady coal company. Sheriff Yost of this county made no effort to stay the thugs. Miners from Pennsylvania and Ohio joined in the gathering, which was the largest trade union assemblage in the history of northern West Virginia. Samuel Brady, coal owner, who is attempting to establish the anti-union shop, was publicly notified that he would not succeed, even though his thugs burned the miners' meeting place and evicted strikers' families from company shacks.

SEES FISH FAMINE

Atlantic City, Sept. 13.—Addressing the United States fisheries association here, Herbert Hoover, secretary of commerce, urged action against "blind and reckless" destruction of fish and shellfish in inland waters. He pointed out that salmon on the Atlantic coast have disappeared as a food supply and they have diminished one-half on the Pacific coast. In 40 years, he said, the sturgeon fisheries of the great lakes have decreased 98 per cent. The shad yield has decreased 70 per cent. In 20 years the Chesapeake oyster fisheries output has decreased 50 per cent.

Mr. Hoover pointed out that the waters of the ocean and inland waters are not an inexhaustible supply for all time and for all future time.

"Nothing is inexhaustible when matched against the mechanical genius of man," he said.

CARPENTERS TO MEET

Indianapolis, Ind., Sept. 13.—The general convention of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners will convene in this city on Sept. 22. The first convention of the brotherhood was held in Chicago in 1881.

UNION-MINED COAL PAYS HIGHER FREIGHT

Springfield, Ill., Sept. 13.—Illinois coal, mined under union conditions, will be driven out of the market by low-wage, non-union Kentucky coal, if equal debt to the interstate commerce commission stands.

The commission has reduced the freight rates on Kentucky product to the northwest market 54 cents a ton and proposes to increase freight rates to the same market of Illinois union-mined coal 28 cents a ton.

Protests by Illinois miners to President Coolidge and to congress have been futile.

"Ever since the war ended strong influences have been diligently at work to bring about a reduction in our wage scale," said President Farrington of the Illinois miners. "Every attempt has failed, no matter what were the means employed to bring it about. We have stood our ground, but now a new and more powerful, and heretofore unknown enemy, has come forward to combat us and he promises to give us the hardest fight of all."

SILK WORKERS UNITE

Nanticoke, Pa., Sept. 13.—Several hundred young silk workers in this vicinity have been organized by the United Textile Workers. This section is being used by New York and New Jersey manufacturers to break down working conditions. The United Textile Workers have met this situation by launching a vigorous out unionization campaign.

MOVIE OPERATORS GAIN

Memphis, Tenn., Sept. 13.—Moving picture operators here have signed an agreement and a 5 per cent wage increase. The new weekly rate is $52.50.

British Labor's Magna Charta Recalled by Trade Unionist

London, England, Sept. 13.—"One hundred years ago British trade unionism became a legal possibility, but no meetings have been held, no publications, and no expressions of thankfulness in respect of an act which did for the common people very much what Magna Charta did for the nobles," writes W. A. Appleton, secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions, in the quarterly report of that organization.

Secretary Appleton refers to this overnight as "A Neglected Centenary."

"Perhaps this year of 1924 finds us too busy trying to discover why the millennium has not arrived—as the result of the political changes which have taken place—to leave any time to celebrate the centenary of the greatest liberating event of all time," Secretary Appleton said.

"I wonder whether many people realize today how tragic were the industrial conditions prior to the passing of the act of 1824? Not only were trade unions illegal institutions, but the penalties against those who attempted to form trade unions were savagely drafted and savagely executed.

"It was illegal even to hold a meeting to consider wages or to collectively approach an employer for the purpose of drawing his attention to wages, or hours, or working conditions. Whatever then existed in the shape of trade unionism, existed illicitly, in secret, and in fear. Whatever wages were agreed upon were subject to wicked depreciation through the truck system which left the employer power to substitute rubbish for cash.

"Times were as bad as bad could be. People were almost mad with suffering. Comparisons between prices and wages indicate the depth to which the standard of existence had fallen for most of the people engaged in industry. Improvements were impossible, but improvements were almost impossible in view of the brutal ignorance prevailing, and the legal restrictions and the cultivated antagonisms.

"If there is one thing above all others which trade unionists ought to rejoice over, and to celebrate, is the centenary of the passing of an act which made it possible, though for so many years, prevented any collective expression of working-class opinion, any effective action on matters connected with employment, with wages and with conditions. The fact that we have got from us a hundred years have intervened. The horrors and wickedness which these years witnessed have passed, and only a few of us can now visualize their effect upon the lives of the men and women who worked.

"They were laws which silenced the voice of the millions of men and women and little children who suffered under an expanding and rapidly changing industrial system, the horrors of which were intensified by the inhumanity of the accepted moral and economic conceptions of the day."

ADDING INSULT TO INJURY

By THOS. F. FLAHERTY

Editor The Union Postal Clerk, Official Organ of the National Federation of Post Office Clerks

President Coolidge's veto of the postal pay bill was a grievous wrong against a practically helpless group of workers whose employer—the American people—had signally and with scarcely a dissenting voice approved the legislation.

He added insult to this injury by making a grotesque political play to placate the postal workers and curry their favor by announcing his willingness to sign a new pay bill—when enacted by congress to meet his wishes.

The president insults the intelligence of the postal workers by his implication that only with his consent can they secure their just dues—an adequate pay standard. He seemingly forgets that congress, acting as the direct representatives of the owners of the service, almost unanimously agreed upon the necessity for higher postal pay rate. The house, on June 6, and the senate, on May 28, voted with but six and three nay votes, respectively, for senate bill 1898.

The president, exercising his right, vetoed the bill. The veto message came before congress awaiting action in December. We can not believe the congress will recede from its position because of the president's opposition. We confidently look to see the veto overriden by substantially the same vote the bill received upon its original passage.

If the president has any genuine regard for the postal workers he should maintain a hand's-off policy until there is a vote on his veto. Having temporarily defeated our wage aims, he should not be too relentless in his desire to impose his will on the more or less helpless postal workers.

We are at least entitled to a clear chance for the last long effort—veto message vote. Mr. Coolidge is making it more difficult for us by his vague gesture and a belated show of interest.

California Federation of Labor Makes Notable Gains In Decade

By PAUL SCHARRENBERG

Secretary-Treasurer California State Federation of Labor

POSITIVE RESULTS

The workmen's compensation, insurance and safety act.

The women's eight-hour law.

Better sanitary conditions in foundries, bakeries and other workshops.

The initiative, referendum and the recall.

Free public employment agencies and partial regulation of private employment agencies.

Legal protection for the union label.

The semi-monthly pay day.

The absent voters' law.

Safety laws to protect those employed in hazardous industries.

Greater educational opportunities for the workers; university extension, vocational education, part-time schools, free text books.

NEGATIVE RESULTS

All proposals to establish compulsory arbitration were defeated.

The appointment of non-citizens as deputy sheriffs, deputy constables and deputy marshals has been prohibited by law.

The ancient "property" qualification for jurors has been abolished.

The unjust poll tax was abolished through the initiative.

The law under which "the entire time of a domestic servant" belonged "to the master" has been repealed.

Attacks on labor laws, too numerous to mention, failed because the state federation of labor is on guard.

The state federation of labor watches the interests of the workers in the state legislature: it indorses or protests in the name of labor and has secured relief from burdensome laws.